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CONCLUSIONS OF SPECIAL USIB SUBCOMMITTEE
ON BERLIN SITUATION*

Period Covered:
13 through 27
December 1961

1. There has been no major change in the general Soviet political position on Berlin during the past two weeks. While Moscow represented the NATO approval of further diplomatic contacts on Berlin as a step forward, this line has been accompanied by a generally negative assessment of Western willingness to negotiate on a "realistic" basis. Within this context of maintaining pressure on the West a number of different sources have reportedly recently that the USSR expects formal East-West negotiations on Berlin by February and that if this fails to occur a bloc peace conference is planned for March to sign a treaty with East Germany.

2. An effort to strengthen Moscow's hand in the negotiations and to remove the question of East Berlin from the area of negotiations probably were the primary motives in Soviet approval of the East German refusal to permit the US political advisor in Berlin or General Watson's civilian aides to enter East Berlin without displaying identification. Since the Soviets were obviously aware that the US officials were proceeding to appointments with their Soviet counterparts, these moves were a deliberate test of

* These conclusions were approved by USIB at its meeting on 28 December 1961.

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Western reaction to a further encroachment on the right of official Allied access.

3. East German security precautions in and around West Berlin continue at a high level. Construction of approximately one hundred watch towers along the zonal and to a lesser extent the sector border has been rushed in an apparent effort to improve East German and Soviet capability of observing developments within the city. Police and border guard detachments along the Berlin sector border were approximately doubled over the Christmas weekend--a security measure that will probably obtain through the holiday period. The East Germans have continued to subject Allied duty trains en route to and from West Berlin to harassing delays. Propaganda attacks on use of the Berlin autobahn by US Army convoys, however, have diminished. Nevertheless, the regime has reserved the right to claim compensation for damages caused by military traffic and may use this excuse to increase the tolls imposed on West German traffic for use of the autobahn.

4. These steps have been accompanied by a heavy propaganda campaign against West Berlin morale, including the planting of hints that "something" would happen in the city during the holiday period. There are signs

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of increasing restiveness among the West Berlin population and growing concern in the business community. People are particularly irate that families separated by the sector border cannot get together during the holidays. The possibility can not be ruled out that individual West Berliners or groups may take action against the wall. The West Berlin Senat is understandably reluctant to use West Berlin police to counter such action but the police reportedly are keeping a careful watch over such groups, particularly students. In this psychological atmosphere, any reasonably credible rumor of possible Western compromise or of further Western withdrawals would find fertile ground.

5. The net effect of developments in the Communist air defenses of East Germany throughout 1961 has been a substantial improvement--both quantitatively and qualitatively--in the ability of the USSR and East Germany to support militarily decisions concerning Berlin. (SECRET)